

RUFUS PUTNAM,

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FOUNDER AND FATHER OF OHIO.

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AN ADDRESS

BY

GEORGE F. HOAR,

ON THE OCCASION OF PLACING A TABLET TO THE MEMORY OF

RUFUS PUTNAM,

UPON HIS DWELLING-HOUSE IN RUTLAND,

17 SEPTEMBER, A. D. 1898.

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Worcester, Mass.

PRESS OF CHARLES HAMILTON,

311 MAIN STREET.

1898.



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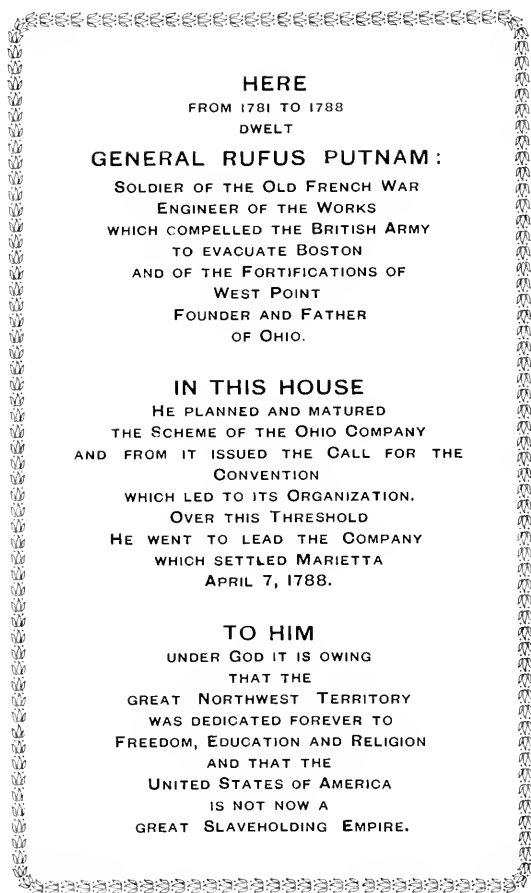
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The General Putnam House, in Rutland, with the farm containing about 150 acres, is now held by George F. Hoar, Elijah B. Stoddard and Burton W. Potter of Worcester, Trustees, who expect to turn it over to the Trustees of Public Reservations as soon as the sum of \$1,500 has been raised by subscription. This is in addition to about \$2,800, raised already.

Tablet placed upon the house in Rutland occupied by GENERAL RUFUS PUTNAM, by the Massachusetts Society of the Sons of the Revolution, September 17th, 1898.



Underneath the Tablet these words are inscribed: "Placed by the Massachusetts Society, Sons of the Revolution," with a fac-simile of their seal.

## ADDRESS.

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THIS Society does well to mark with visible and enduring tablets the spots where great deeds have been performed or great men have been born or dwelt. Whatever Massachusetts has done, whatever she is doing, whatever she is to accomplish hereafter, is largely owing to the fact that she has kept unbroken the electric current flowing from soul to soul forever and forever, as it was generated now nearly three hundred years ago at Plymouth. Her generations have taken hold of hands.

The men of Plymouth Rock and of Salem, the men who cleared the forest, the heroes of the Indian and the old French wars, the men who imprisoned Andros, the men who fought the Revolution, the men who humbled the power of France at Louisburg and the power of Spain at Martinique and Havana, the men who won our independence and builded our Constitution, the sailors of the great sea fights of the war of 1812, the soldiers who saved the Union, and the men who went with Hobson on the Merrimac, or fought with Dewey at Manila, or under Sampson or before the trenches at Santiago, have been of one temper from the beginning—the old Massachusetts spirit, which we hope may endure and abide until time shall be no more.

We guard with an affectionate reverence even the tombs and burial-places where the dust of our ancestors

has been laid. As the great orator of New England, said nearly eighty years ago:

“We naturally look with strong emotions to the spot, though it be a wilderness, where the ashes of those we have loved repose. Where the heart has laid down what it loved most, there it is desirous of laying itself down. No sculptured marble, no enduring monument, no honorable inscription, no ever-burning taper that would drive away the darkness of the tomb, can soften our sense of the reality of death and hallow to our feelings the ground which is to cover us, like the consciousness that we shall sleep, dust to dust, with the objects of our affection.”

But, after all, we cherish with greater and more intense reverence the places where those whom we love and honor have dwelt in life, the scenes on which their living eyes gazed and to which the living forms were familiar, especially the scenes where the great heroes and statesmen of the past have dwelt, or the great beneficent actions which have determined the currents of our history have been performed.

It is such a man and such a deed that we are here to celebrate today. Many facts illustrating the character of Rufus Putnam and the service he performed for his country have been brought to light for the first time by the researches of recent investigation and the publication of records hitherto little known or explored, especially the archives in the Department of State and the diaries and correspondence of some of his associates.

Rufus Putnam was one of those men, rare in all generations, perhaps more rare now than formerly, who seem to be almost absolutely without care for self. He seems to have been indifferent to fame. He had little use for the first personal pronoun in his speech or his writings. He was content to accomplish useful results.



He was intent upon the goal, not upon the prize. If he could accomplish useful results, he cared nothing for the pride or glory of the achievement.

Among the chief elements of his greatness is his great unconsciousness. So much the more is it the duty of posterity to guard his fame and pay him his due meed of credit and honor. To the genius of Rufus Putnam was due the favorable result at three great turning-points in American history.

It was his skill as an engineer that compelled the evacuation of Boston. It was his skill as an engineer that fortified West Point. To him was due the settlement of the Ohio Territory and the adoption of the Ordinance of 1787, which dedicated the Northwest forever to freedom, education and religion, and, in the end, saved the United States from becoming a great slaveholding empire.

The limit of the time at my command compels me to relate these great transactions rapidly. It must be but a sketch, a glance. But I will take time enough to make out my case.

If the British could have held Boston until sufficient reinforcements could have come over from England, it would have paralyzed the arm of Massachusetts, the State which not only furnished more soldiers to the war than all the Southern States put together, but, what is not so well known, put upon the sea more sailors than the entire number of the whole Continental army put together—a naval power which, before the French alliance, raised the rate of marine insurance in England to 28 per cent., and caused the merchants of Great Britain to compel George III. and Lord North to make peace.

The investment of Boston by the patriotic forces and

the expulsion of the British was one of the most successful audacities of military history. The British were entrenched on a peninsula only accessible by a single narrow neck of land. They were an army of trained veterans 8,000 strong, supported by a powerful fleet whose seamen brought up the force to 11,000, having in the harbor at their command 120 transports well provisioned, well equipped with ample supplies of ammunition and cannon. They were in the best of spirits. The officers and men alike beguiled their time with stage plays, masquerades and other diversions, in comfortable quarters, without a thought of danger. Lord Howe informed the ministry that there was not the slightest fear of an attack. They had, of course, full command of the harbor, into which vessels were constantly bringing provisions in abundance.

On the other hand, Washington had under his command a band of undisciplined husbandmen, scarcely 14,000 in number, with a few cannon which had been captured from the enemy, and a few that had been dragged overland from Lake George. He had at best, as Mr. Bancroft states, only powder enough to supply his few cannon for six or eight days. His men had not been paid since the first of the preceding December. The greater part of his men were enlisted for but two months.

The resources of England seemed almost inexhaustible, and she had also engaged reinforcements of more than 20,000 German mercenaries. England could wait. Every day increased her strength and courage. Every day diminished the hopes of the patriots.

Washington must fight at this great disadvantage or the cause of the country seemed hopeless. He had determined, at whatever risk, to march his men across

the ice against Boston, unless some plan for commanding the town from the neighboring heights, an attempt which had so signally failed at Bunker Hill, should be found feasible.

We shall see in a moment what Rufus Putnam contributed to this accomplishment, but for which the strength of Massachusetts must have been subtracted from the cause of independence. You know well what would have become of the cause of independence without it.

West Point, after Rufus Putnam fortified it, was to the war of the Revolution what Vicksburg was to the war of the Rebellion. It prevented the separation of New England from the rest of the country, as Vicksburg, while it commanded the Mississippi, prevented the separation of the States in rebellion in the East and West. The difference was that our Vicksburg was never captured.

I shall speak a little later of the historical results of the settlement of Ohio and the Ordinance of 1787. I will first give a brief sketch of the life of Rufus Putnam down to the time when he came to this house in Rutland and the time when he left it to found an empire in the Northwest, carrying with him the fate of America.

Rufus Putnam was born in Sutton, in this county, on the 9th of April (O. S.), 1738. He came of a race of Worcester and Essex County yeomen, distinguished in every generation, so far as we know their history, for public spirit, simplicity, integrity and common sense.

He was cousin, with a single remove, of General Israel Putnam, the man "who dared to lead where any man dared to follow." He was, I think, the grand-nephew of Joseph Putnam, father of Israel, another

hero of the old Putnam breed, who defied another horrible she-wolf, the witchcraft delusion, at the height of its power in the very den where it was born.

Elisha Putnam, father of Rufus, died when the son was seven years old. General Putnam's account of his family says his father was a much respected citizen, town clerk, a deacon in the church, and representative from Sutton in the General Court. He died June 10, 1745.

His mother married again. The step-father seems to have cared little for the child. He was illiterate himself and despised learning. The little boy, as he tells us in a pathetic diary written late in life, had no chance to go to school, and little opportunity for learning at home. No books were furnished him, and he had little time to use books, if he had them.

Captain Sadler, the step-father, kept a tavern. Rufus got a few pennies by waiting upon guests and blacking their boots, with which he bought powder, and with the help of an old gun killed some partridges, which he sold and with the proceeds bought a spelling-book and an arithmetic. From these he learned what he could, and got as far as the rule of three in arithmetic. But the miserly step-father would not allow him the light of a tallow candle in the long winter evenings and ridiculed his aspirations for learning.

In March, 1754, Putnam was apprenticed to Daniel Mathews, of Brookfield. He was then nearly sixteen years old. Mathews was a millwright. Putnam never attended school but three days after he was nine years old.

His employer, more generous than had been the step-father, gave him the use of candles for the long winter evenings. He studied arithmetic, geography and his-

tory. He extended his knowledge of mathematics and engineering, for which he had a natural aptness. His physical frame grew as rapidly as his mind. When he was eighteen years old he had the full vigor and stature of a man six feet high. He was renowned for his great strength and activity in all athletic exercises.

It was to those winter evenings in North Brookfield and the studies by the light of the tallow candle that his country owed the ablest engineer officer of the Revolution, and the wise, farsighted intellect that decided the fate of America.

I have, in my time, known many men famous in war, in statesmanship, in science, in the professions and in business. If I were asked to declare the secret of their success, I should attribute it, in general, not to any superiority of natural genius, but to the use they made, in youth, after the ordinary day's work was over, of the hours which other men throw away, or devote to idleness or rest.

Putnam enlisted in the old French war at the age of nineteen. His adventures in that war sound like one of Cooper's romances. He saved enough of his bounty and pay to buy a small farm. He married in April, 1761, Elizabeth, daughter of William Ayers of Brookfield, who died shortly afterward. January 10, 1765, he married again Persis Rice of Westboro, who was the mother of his children.

He was made Lieutenant-Colonel of a Worcester County regiment at the outbreak of the Revolution, and joined the camp at Cambridge just after the battle of April 19. His genius as an engineer was soon disclosed. He was, as Washington expressly and repeatedly certified, the ablest engineer officer of the war, whether American or Frenchman.

He was soon called by a Council of general and field officers to direct the construction of a large part of the works on which the position of the army besieging Boston depended. He told Washington he had never read a word on that branch of science. But the chieftain would take no denial. He performed his task to the entire satisfaction of his commander, and was soon ordered to superintend the defences of Providence and Newport.

One evening in the winter of 1775-76 Putnam was invited to dine at headquarters. Washington detained him after the company had departed to consult him about an attack on Boston. The General preferred an intrenchment on Dorchester Heights, which would compel Howe to attack him and risk another Bunker Hill engagement with a different result, to marching his own troops over the ice to storm the town. But the ground was frozen to a great depth and resisted the pickaxe like solid rock.

Putnam was ordered to consider the matter, and if he could find any way to execute Washington's plan to report at once. He himself best tells the story of the accident—we may almost say the miracle—by which the deliverance of Massachusetts from the foreign invader, a veteran British army, eleven thousand strong, was wrought by the instrumentality of the millwright's apprentice.

"I left the headquarters in company with another gentleman, and on our way came to General Heath's. I had no thoughts of calling until I came against his door, and then I said, 'Let us call on General Heath,' to which he agreed. I had no other motive but to pay my respects to the General. While there I cast my eye on a book which lay on the table, lettered on the back, 'Muller's Field Engineer.' I immediately re-

quested the General to lend it to me. He denied me. I repeated my request. He again refused, and told me he never lent his books. I told him that he must recollect that he was one, who, at Roxbury, in a measure compelled me to undertake a business, which, at the time, I confessed I had never read a word about, and that he must let me have the book. After some more excuses on his part and close pressing on mine I obtained the loan of it."

In looking at the table of contents his eye was caught by the word "chandelier," a new word to him. He read carefully the description and saw its importance at a glance. The chandeliers were made of stout timbers, ten feet long, into which were framed posts five feet high and five feet apart, placed on the ground in parallel lines and the open spaces filled in with bundles of fascines, strongly picketed together, thus forming a movable parapet of wood instead of earth, as theretofore done.

Putnam soon had his plan ready. The men were immediately set to work in the adjacent apple orchard and woodlands, cutting and bundling up the fascines and carrying them with the chandeliers on to the ground selected for the work. They were put in their place in a single night.

When the sun went down on Boston on the 4th of March Washington was at Cambridge, and Dorchester Heights as nature or the husbandman had left them in the autumn. When Sir William Howe rubbed his eyes on the morning of the 5th, he saw through the heavy mists the intrenchments, on which, he said, the rebels had done more work in a night than his whole army would have done in a month. He wrote to Lord Dartmouth that it must have been the employment of at least 12,000 men. His own effective force, including seamen,

was but about 11,000. Washington had but 14,000 fit for duty.

"Some of our officers," said the *Annual Register*—Edmund Burke was the writer—"acknowledged that the expedition with which these works were thrown up, with their sudden and unexpected appearance, recalled to their minds the wonderful stories of enchantment and invisible agency which are so frequent in the Eastern romances."

Howe was a man of spirit. He took the prompt resolution to attempt to dislodge the Americans the next night, before the works were made impregnable. Earl Percy, who had learned something of the Yankee quality at Bunker Hill and Lexington, was to command the assault. But the power that dispersed the Armada baffled all the plans of the British general. There came "a dreadful storm at night," which made it impossible to cross the bay until the American works were perfected.

We take no leaf from the pure chaplet of Washington's fame when we say that the success of the first great military operation of the Revolution was due to Rufus Putnam. The Americans under Israel Putnam marched into Boston, drums beating and colors flying. The veteran British army, aided by a strong naval force, soldier and sailor, Englishman and Tory, sick and well, bag and baggage, got out of Boston before the strategy of Washington, the engineering of Putnam, and the courage of the despised and untried yeomen, from whose leaders they withheld the usual titles of military respect. "It resembled," said Burke, "more the emigration of a nation than the breaking up of a camp."

The history of the founding of Ohio and of the Ordinance of 1787 has been brought to light lately, chiefly from researches in the Department of State, the publication of the diaries of Manasseh Cutler, the cor-



respondence of Timothy Pickering and the papers of Rufus King.

This is a fit occasion to tell the story of Putnam's share in these great transactions. April 7, 1783, Timothy Pickering, Quartermaster-General in the armies of the United States, afterward Secretary of War, Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, Representative in Congress and Senator, writes a letter to Mr. Hodgdon, in which is the following passage:

“ A new plan is in contemplation, no less than forming a new State westward of the Ohio. About a week since the matter was set on foot and a plan is digesting for the purpose. Enclosed is a rough draft of some propositions respecting it. They are in the hands of General Huntington and General Putnam for consideration, amendment and addition.”

The eleventh article of this draft enclosed in Pickering's letter contains this sentence: “ The total exclusion of slavery from the State to form an essential and irrevocable part of the Constitution.” General Huntington is not, so far as I know, heard of again in the transaction, but Putnam is found pressing the scheme thenceforth until its final accomplishment. April 14, 1783, Pickering again writes to Hodgdon. He says: “ General Putnam is warmly engaged in the new-planned settlement on the Ohio.”

Later, a petition signed by 288 officers in the Continental Army is presented to Congress, praying for the location and survey of the Western lands. This petition, in which Putnam heads the list of Massachusetts signers, is forwarded by him to Washington. A year later Putnam writes to Washington again, renewing his urgent application to him for aid in his project. He says the part he has taken in promoting the petition is

well known. He has given much time to it since he left the army.

He specially urges the adoption of the New England township system. He asks the General to recommend to him some member of Congress with whom he can directly correspond, as he does not like even to hint these things to the delegates from Massachusetts, though worthy men, as Massachusetts is forming plans to sell her own eastern lands. Washington answers that he has exerted every power with Congress that he is master of, and has dwelt upon Putnam's argument for speedy decision, but that Congress has adjourned without action.

In 1785 Congress appointed General Putnam one of the surveyors of the northwestern lands. Putnam accepted the office. He says in his letter of acceptance: "A wish to promote immigration from among my friends into that country, and not the wages stipulated, is my principal motive."

Putnam, however, had made some engagements which made it impossible for him to go in person to Ohio and make the survey. His friend, General Tupper, undertook the duty. Tupper could not get below Pittsburg in the season of 1785. He came back to Massachusetts with such knowledge of the country as he could get from inquiry, and reported to Putnam at Rutland in this house on the 9th of January, 1786.

The two veterans sat up together all night. At day-break they had completed a call for the convention to form a company. It was addressed to all officers and soldiers of the late war, and all other good citizens residing in Massachusetts who might wish to become purchasers of lands in the Ohio country. The invitation

was to extend afterward to inhabitants of other States "as might be agreed on."

This convention was composed of delegates from the various counties in Massachusetts, met at the Bunch of Grapes in Boston, March 1, 1786, and chose a committee, of which Putnam was chairman, to draft a plan for the organization. This organization constituted the Ohio Company, of which Putnam, General Samuel H. Parsons and Rev. Manasseh Cutler were chosen directors. Early in 1787 the directors appointed Putnam superintendent of all their affairs, and in the winter of 1786-87 the organization was completed and the associates selected.

It remained only to get the grant of the lands. There had been various schemes in Congress from March 1, 1784, for the organization of the Northwest territory. Jefferson reported one on the first day of March in that year, which contained a provision excluding slavery after 1800. The subsequent history proves beyond a question that a toleration of slavery until that time would have ended in making the whole territory slaveholding.

But even that limited and ineffective prohibition was stricken out by the Congress. March 16, 1785, Rufus King of Massachusetts offered a resolve that there should be no slavery in this territory. It was sent to a committee of which he was chairman and amended by postponing the prohibition of slavery till 1800, and with a clause providing for the surrender of fugitive slaves. That was never acted upon and died in committee.

In 1786 a new committee was raised to propose a plan for the government of the territory. They made a report which contained no prohibition of slavery whatever. That report also remained without action until the end of the Congress.

When Putnam had got his plan for the company ready

and secured his associates, he sent General Parsons to Congress to secure the grant of the lands and the passage of an ordinance for the government of the territory. But Parsons returned having accomplished absolutely nothing.

Putnam was not discouraged. He met Manasseh Cutler, the other director, in Boston, June 25, 1787, and it was agreed that Cutler should renew the attempt in which Jefferson and Rufus King and Parsons and Washington and several committees of the Continental Congress had so conspicuously failed.

Manasseh Cutler records in his diary: "I conversed with General Putnam and settled the principles on which I am to contract with Congress for lands on account of the Ohio Company."

Cutler reached New York, where Congress was in session, on the 6th of July, and was introduced into their chamber. He explained his scheme to the members of Congress. In three days a new committee was appointed, the ordinance, which had expired with the last session, brought forward and committed. A copy of the ordinance was sent to Cutler, that he might make remarks and prepare amendments.

The next day, the 10th, the ordinance was newly modelled. It was reported to Congress on the 11th. But it did not include the clause prohibiting slavery because, as Nathan Dane, who reported it, said, he had no idea the States would agree to it. But Dane moved it as an amendment. It was inserted and passed unanimously, save the single vote of Abram Yates.

During the two or three days that this ordinance was pending the committee proposed to reject some of Cutler's amendments; he does not specify which. "There-upon he paid his respects to all the members of Congress

in the city, informed them of his intention to depart that day, and if his terms were not acceded to, to turn his attention to some other part of the country."

They urged him, as he says, to "tarry till the next day, and they would put by all other business to complete the contract." He records further in his diary that "Congress came to the terms stated in our letter without the least variation."

Why was it that Congress came in three days to terms which the influence of Washington and of Jefferson had failed to accomplish for more than four years? Putnam and Cutler were masters of the situation. The Ohio Company might well dictate its own terms, even in dealing with the far-sighted statesmen of 1787.

The purchase and settlement of this large body of the public lands removed from their minds several subjects of deepest anxiety. It afforded a provision for the veterans of the war. It extinguished a considerable portion of the public debt. It largely increased the value of the rest of the public domain. It placed the shield of a settlement of veteran soldiers between the frontiers of New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia and the most dangerous and powerful Indian tribes on the continent.

It secured to American occupation a territory on which England, France and Spain were still gazing with eager and longing eyes; in which England, in violation of treaty obligation, still held on to her military posts, hoping that the feeble band of our union would break in pieces. It removed a fear, never absent from the minds of the public men of that day, that the Western settlers would form a new confederacy and seek an alliance with the power that held the outlet of the Mississippi.

The strength of this last apprehension is shown in

the confidential correspondence of Washington. He twice refers to it in his farewell address,—once when he warns the West against “an apostate and unnatural connection with any foreign power”; and again, when he urges them, “henceforth to be deaf to those advisers, if such there are, who would sever them from their brethren and connect them with aliens.”

Cutler returned to Massachusetts successful and in triumph. He was not himself one of the first settlers in Ohio, but his sons represented him.

Putnam led his company down the Ohio River to Marietta on board a galley appropriately named the *Mayflower*, giving new honor and fragrance to the name. He landed with his little company of forty-eight men April 7, 1788.

There is no question that but for this clause in the Ordinance that territory, if it had remained a part of the country, would have been slave territory. It would have been settled from Virginia and Kentucky. As it was, it was saved to freedom as by fire. The people of Indiana repeatedly petitioned Congress to be relieved from the clause prohibiting the introduction of slavery. A majority of the people of Illinois was pro-slavery, and the recognition of slavery in the first constitution of that State was only prevented by the dexterity and sagacity of Governor Coles.

When Ohio was admitted in 1802, the convention that framed her Constitution contained a large number of the friends of slavery. Rufus Putnam, himself a member of the convention, called up late at night the son of Manasseh Cutler, also a member of the convention, from a sick bed, told him of the danger, and the two patriots repaired to the chamber just in time to save the establishment of slavery, which was lost by a single vote.

Now, in the light of this history, if Rufus Putnam be not entitled to the credit of the Ordinance of 1787, and of having saved this country from becoming a great slaveholding empire, then Wellington is not entitled to the credit of Waterloo, or Washington to the credit of Yorktown, or Grant to the credit of Appomattox.

Putnam is the first person known to have in his possession five years before this enactment the plan for the organization of the Ohio Company, in which the total exclusion of slavery from the State was to form an essential and irrevocable part of the Constitution. Then for the next four or five years he is found, and found alone, pressing that scheme upon the consideration of Washington, and through him upon a reluctant Congress.

He accepts the office of surveyor, only that he may promote this scheme. Not able to go himself, he receives from General Tupper in this house the information gained by him at Pittsburg. In this house is formed the plan of the Ohio Company, and from it he issued the call for its first convention. He is made chairman of the committee to draw up a perfected scheme. He is made by that company the general director of its affairs.

At its meeting in Boston, November 21, 1787, he is chosen superintendent, "to be obeyed and respected accordingly." He sends Cutler to Congress, first having agreed with him in Boston upon the principles upon which the company will make the purchase. Is there any doubt that among those principles was the inexorable condition of the exclusion of slavery, which was in his hands and upon which he had determined from the beginning?

He leads the company to Marietta. On the first anni-

versary of the settlement of Marietta, in 1789, the company voted that the 7th of April be forever observed as a public festival, being, as they say, "the day when General Putnam commenced the settlement in this country."

All the contemporary histories of Ohio assign him this credit. Lossing calls him the father of Ohio. Burnet says, "He was regarded as their principal chief and leader." Harris dedicates the documents collected in his appendix to Rufus Putnam, the "founder and father of the State."

And at last, that the great drama might end as it began, his vote saved the State from the imposition of slavery by its constitutional convention in 1802. His vote—his single vote and his summons to the son of his old friend, Manasseh Cutler—secured the majority of one which saved the State from the imposition of slavery in 1802.

Suppose those five States, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, which were formed from the Ohio territory, had been settled from Virginia, each of them another Missouri or another Kentucky? What think you would have been our condition today? A few States, perhaps, on our eastern and northern border without slavery, but subjected forever, if the Union had lasted, to the slaveholding rule of which we had experience, even as it was, for the generation before the breaking out of the rebellion. If there be, in the annals of this republic, save Washington and Lincoln alone, a benefactor whose deeds surpass those of Rufus Putnam, I have read American history in vain.

Washington said of Rufus Putnam that he was the best engineer in the army, whether French or American. At the end of the war he directed Putnam to



report a comprehensive plan for fortifying the whole country. I have seen General Putnam's elaborate scheme, I think among his papers at Marietta College, or in the archives at Washington. It was never executed, in spite of earnest appeals of some of our ablest statesmen in every generation from Washington to Jackson and Tilden and Eugene Hale.

It remains a monument of that national improvidence of which we have shown so many conspicuous examples, especially in the matter of preparation for defence and for war, and which, during the last few months, has even dimmed the glories of Manila and Santiago.

To be a great engineer is to be a great soldier. To be a great engineer with only such advantages of education as Rufus Putnam enjoyed is to be a man of consummate genius. But to have been the trusted friend of Washington; to have conceived as by a flash of inspiration the works which with an inferior force compelled England to evacuate a fortified town and to quit Massachusetts forever; to have constructed the very fortress and citadel of our strength and defence in the war of the Revolution; to have been in Lord Bacon's front rank of sovereign honor; to have founded a mighty State, herself the mother of mighty States; to have planned, constructed and made impregnable the very citadel and fortress of liberty on this continent; to have turned the mighty stream of current and empire from the channel of slavery into the channel of freedom, there to flow forever and forever,—if this be not greatness, then there is no greatness among the living or the dead.

I must not leave your opinion of the value of the great work of Rufus Putnam to depend upon my testimony alone. Daniel Webster declared in his reply to Hayne: "We are accustomed to praise the lawgivers of anti-

quity; we help to perpetuate the fame of Solon and Lycurgus, but I doubt whether one single law of any lawgiver, ancient or modern, has produced effects of more distinct, marked and lasting character than the Ordinance of 1787.

“It fixed forever the character of the population in the vast regions northwest of the Ohio by excluding from them involuntary servitude. It impressed on the soil itself, while it was yet a wilderness, an incapacity to sustain any other than free men. It laid the interdict against personal servitude in original compact not only deeper than all local law, but deeper, also, than all local constitutions.”

Mr. Webster added: “We see the consequences of the ordinance at this moment, and we shall never cease to see them, perhaps, while the Ohio shall flow.”

Judge Walker, the eminent Jurist of Ohio, declares: “Upon the surpassing excellence of this ordinance no language of panegyric would be extravagant. The Romans would have imagined some divine Egeria for its author. It approaches as nearly to absolute perfection as anything to be found in the legislation of mankind; for, after the experience of fifty years, it would perhaps be impossible to alter without marring it. In short, it is one of those matchless specimens of sagacious forecast which even the reckless spirit of innovation would not venture to assail. The emigrant knew beforehand, that this was a land of the highest political as well as natural promise; and under the auspices of another Moses, he journeyed with confidence toward his new Canaan.”

Judge Story says: “The ordinance is remarkable for its masterly display of the fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty.”

Chief Justice Chase, in his sketch of the history of the "Statutes of Ohio," said: "Never, probably, in the history of the world, did a measure of legislation so accurately fulfil and yet so mightily exceed the anticipations of the legislators. The ordinance has well been described as having been a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, in the settlement and government of the northwestern States."

During the years he lived in Rutland he gave himself without stint to the service of the town. No work was too humble for him if it were a duty or a service. He had the noble public spirit of his day. For five years he tilled this farm, and seems to have done everything his neighbors asked of him.

He was representative to the General Court, selectman, constable, tax collector, on a committee to lay out school lands, committee to make repairs of school-house, State surveyor, commissioner to treat with the Penobscot Indians, volunteer in putting down the Shays rebellion, on the committee to settle with Jabez Fairbanks. He was one of the founders and first trustees of the Leicester Academy, and, with his family of eight children, gave from his slender means £100 towards its endowment.

The rest of his life is, in large part, the history of Marietta for more than thirty years. "The impression of his character," says the historian, "is strongly marked in the history of Marietta, in their buildings, institutions and manners."

Now this seems to me to be a good, honest, old-fashioned American story. It is a Massachusetts story. It is a Worcester County story, although we by no means pretend to a monopoly of such things in Massachusetts or in Worcester County. We have got over

wondering at them. The boy went to school but three days after he was nine years old. That has happened before to many a boy who became a great man, from Ulysses to Abraham Lincoln.

A Worcester County farm in those days was a pretty good school. It was a pretty good school, both for the intellect and the heart. The boy learned the secrets of the forest and the field, the names and habits of bird and beast. He could take care of himself anywhere. He became an expert woodsman and sharpshooter.

He heard high topics discussed in the church—I beg your pardon—in the meeting-house. The talk by the blacksmith's forge and the tavern fire, and the rude drafting-board of the millwright, when the great political contest with England was pending, was of the true boundary between liberty and authority in the government of the State, and between men's free will and God's foreknowledge and omnipotence in the government of the universe.

The moral quality of our great English race, too, came out in that simple life of plain living and high thinking. Every day brought to those frugal households its lesson of affection, of self-sacrifice.

“ Love had he found in huts where poor men lie :  
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,  
The silence that is in the starry sky,  
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.”

The old French war, with its adventures and escapes through the forests, was better for him than a West Point education. But above all were the love of country, the sense of duty, the instinct of honor, glowing as bright in the bosom of the country boy as in that of a Bayard or a Sidney. And so, when his country needed him and his God called him, he was ready.

My friends, I do not know what you think about it. But for myself, as a son of Massachusetts, I would rather possess among her historic monuments this simple dwelling of this Rutland farmer, when I think of what it stands for, all it has contained, all the memories that cluster around it, than to have the palace of the Tuileries.

As Edward Everett said of Mount Vernon: "The porter's lodge, or the dog kennel of the palace, erected by the gratitude of England to the victor of Blenheim, could not have been built for its entire cost."

Her Majesty's master of hounds, or the keeper of the queen's mews, or the purveyor of the royal kitchen, I dare say, would disdain it as a dwelling-place. Certainly there were columns, there were carvings in the famous French palace built from the plunder of foreign capitals and the spoils of groaning peasants and subject peoples, as a symbol of the glory of France and the military genius of her monarchs, which cost more than the whole of this simple structure. But at least an angry people will never tear it down as the symbol of their own degradation and oppression.

Three days at school after you were nine years old; bootblack and blacksmith's assistant at Sutton; millwright's apprentice of Brookfield; town constable of Rutland; friend of Washington; deliverer under Washington of Massachusetts from the foreign invader; builder of our stronghold and citadel at West Point; engineer of the great constitutional fortress of American liberty; faithful over a few things, ruler over many things,—we come today to your dwelling as to a shrine.

It is not to be forgotten. It must not be forgotten, unless Mount Vernon is to be forgotten. There is

nothing left but a few stones of the cellar wall of Putnam's birthplace, as there is nothing left but a few bricks of the birthplace of Washington. But this house is still to be seen as Mount Vernon is still to be seen. It can be preserved at a slight cost for many centuries to come. This reverent, affectionate task is well worthy the piety and patriotism of our generation.



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